

O. BAINBRIDGE, M. A.



On Friday evening next Mr. Bainbridge will appear under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association in his varied and bright recital, in which he will play a number of parts. He will describe in an eloquent and humorous manner the many wonderful experiences and escapes that have befallen him in the numerous foreign countries that he has so successfully passed through. The Hobart Mercury says: "Our distinguished visitor's lecture is not a dry discourse, but a most enjoyable recital of adventure, interspersed with sparkling humor and clever lightning sketches." Mr. Bainbridge will give a number of his black-board sketches and illustrated stories which are spoken of as exceedingly clever and highly amusing. During the evening Mr. Bainbridge will recite some of his own compositions. Mrs. Bainbridge, who holds honors from Trinity College and Royal Academy of Music, London, will play several difficult selections. She has been associated with such eminent masters as Kowalski and Rafalewski (the cleverest all-round musician in the world). The

mission funds. This extra fine of thirty-three and one-third per cent is distinctly admitted by Dr. Ament. "In general the process has been as follows: To demand the rebuilding of houses, or an equivalent in money, to demand payment for tools and grains carried off, or for animals stolen; in case the head of a family had been murdered, or one who was the provider, the sum of 500 taels is demanded for the support of widows and orphans who have no other visible means of support."

No comment is needed here. However, satisfactory to the Rev. Dr. Ament's conscience was the motive of his demands upon the villages, the collection of the indemnity and the collection of the additional exaction for the mission funds was conceived and carried out in the spirit of lynch law; and in many if not most cases the penalty imposed by Rev. Dr. Ament must have fallen not upon the persons guilty of the original outrage, but upon those innocent of participation in it.

As to the general attitude of the Rev. Dr. Ament toward the Chinese who have not accepted the gospel he went forth to preach, his statement is illuminating. There is no word from beginning to end that is in sympathy with the spirit of brotherhood and mercy and forgiveness which is so large a part of the religion Christ taught to mankind. The reverend doctor is a missionary of the Church militant. He is a practical man. He believes in making examples of the wicked. In questions of punishment for crimes committed against the native Christians, he seems at every point disposed to demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. We quote his criticism of the leniency of an expedition despatched by General Wilson into the region east of Peking to rescue certain Christian families who were surrounded by Boxers. General Wilson's orders were that no soldier should fire a gun unless fired upon. Of this expedition the Rev. Dr. Ament remarks with some show of exasperation:

"The Chinese could not understand such leniency. A well-equipped body of 250 cavalymen, under able officers, passed through a region filled with blood-thirsty Boxers, whose hands were red with the blood of more than a hundred Christians, where thousands of dollars' worth of property had been destroyed and many chapels burned, and not one man was called to account for this terrible lawlessness!"

And a little further, on he contrasts the swift retribution that fell upon any community that fired upon the invading military with the forbearance shown to villages where the missionaries and their flocks had suffered:

"One gun fired at a troop of foreign soldiers would result in the destruction of a village or villages and the loss of many lives. That was considered justice or the necessities of warfare. But in a village where scores of native Christians have perished by the hands of the Boxers, and missionaries have been driven out and vilified, for the latter to demand the punishment of a few notorious leaders is considered by some contrary to the professions they make."

Is not this an extraordinary complaint? Does it not read as if it came from an Old Testament Christian?

The fourth charge has been that of looting. The Rev. Dr. Ament says: "In explanation of anything that missionaries may have done in the line of looting, it is only right to say that a famine was predicted for the coming winter, that they had hundreds of people in their charge who were in immediate need of food, clothing and shelter, and who looked to the missionaries for assistance. It is but justice to them to say that if in the ardor of their desire to provide for their people they did some things that attracted criticism they did it with the best of intentions and honest desire to provide for the people for whom they felt more or less responsible."

Dr. Ament himself took possession of the palace from which a Mongol prince had fled at the approach of the relief expedition. The reverend doctor does not deny that he appropriated and sold off the valuables belonging to the Mongol prince whose house he occupied but urges as an excuse that this same prince had been active in the persecution of the mission people, and in the destruction of their property; and he adds:

"The question may be asked as to the right or propriety of the missionary selling off the stuff which he found in the

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place he took as a residence. At the close of the siege missionaries in common with all other foreigners in Peking had to hasten and gather in what grain they could from various sources for their own and their people's consumption. As they had no money with which to purchase clothing and other necessities for themselves and their people, it was suggested by the United States Minister, Mr. Conger, that the missionaries sell the stuff found on the premises they occupied. . . . It would seem but the mildest form of punishment that the clothing and curios found in his (the Mongol prince's) premises should be sold for the benefit of those who had survived his murderous attacks."

And he goes on:

"If there is anything wrong in this I should be pleased to have our critics point it out. Furthermore, if a proper indemnity is paid by the Chinese Government for the support during those few months of the people who had been rendered homeless by the Boxers the sum of money received for the sale of his goods could be returned to this Mongol prince."

Questioned as to the morality of this avowed looting, this taking possession of other people's houses and property on the plea that there was nowhere else for him to go, and no other way of supporting himself, the Rev. Dr. Ament advanced this general proposition:

"If there was any moral obliquity in looking toward those places as their rightful abodes, we fail to discern it and ask our critics to point out how we could have done differently in times of such special stress and necessity. While believing that right is always right and wrong is always wrong, yet there are many actions that are relatively so. While one year ago it would have been a moral wrong to walk into these premises and take our abode there, we contend that we were fully justified in what we have done under the circumstances above described."

In several other parts of his interview the Rev. Dr. Ament admits the fact of the looting of abandoned houses by missionaries, and the sale of the looted articles for the account of their unlawful possessors. The deeds he narrates can be justified on the military ground of "living off the enemy's country." They can be justified again on the theory that permits the despoiling of the Egyptians. Finally, they seem to come under the Rev. Dr. Ament's maxim that while "right is always right and wrong is always wrong, yet there are many actions that are relatively so." But it is doubtful if these same deeds of plunder and conversion into cash, no matter on what ground excused, will stand the searching light of the language of one of the commandments conveyed to Moses on Sinai, and by the Rev. Dr. Ament, probably taught to his Chinese converts as one of their very earliest lessons in Christianity.

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